UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

MINUTES

The 825th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
Held on November 16, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. in Herter 227

A. PRESENTATION – Classroom Equity Action Plan: Improving Equity in Belonging and Connectedness

Wilmore Webley – Professor & Senior Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion
Barb Chalfonte – Associate Provost, Analytics & Assessment

Senior Vice Provost Webley: Thank you Presiding Officer.

Good evening everyone. I am really excited. Thank you Secretary Paik for giving us this opportunity to talk a little bit about the Classroom Equity Action Plan, that we deployed earlier this year. Which is specifically defined to look at the sense of belonging and connectedness and time to complete.

Belonging is an interesting concept and an interesting, overall, thought process. Belonging is a nuanced term. Belonging is happening in the context of several other intersecting modalities at the same time. From someone's motivations, to their perceptions, to someone's opportunities, to their competencies within a space. All of those are happening dynamically even as that space is changing because of social, environmental, or political reasons.

And so, someone's sense of belonging is really asking about whether they are important in this space. So, belonging really is not about fitting in. It is about you are authentically being yourself and still being accepted in that space no matter your flaws and short-comings might be.

So in the context of a university setting, we have to go back historically to what universities, what education in this country has been. That there was a time in this country, where certain groups of people never belonged in that educational setting. And so black and brown people specifically, our educational system was never created for them.

After integration, every major study in this country shows that there are still residues of the sense of "lack of belonging" as many black and brown students experienced during the Civil Rights Movements of the 50s and 60s.

So our students, in the last time we surveyed them, our black and brown students told us that they are not feeling a sense of belonging in many of these spaces. In fact, our black students, 26% of them said that they felt no sense of belonging and 17% of Latino students said they had no sense of belonging on our campus. We tie this to the classroom because when we ask them about their experiences in the class room, "do you feel excluded in your classroom?", again you see that it is our black and brown students who were saying that they often feel excluded.

When we asked them about what are the attributes that you have that you think make you feel excluded the top three were gender (12%), race and ethnicity (10%). Overall, when we think about belonging, we connect that with performance. 80% of our Caucasian students finish UMass in four years. That is compared to the 62% of our Black students and 67% of our Latino and Native American students.

So, in an attempt to address this, the previous Provost, Tricia Serio, put in place this Equity Action Plan. She saw it as a continuous improvement process where departments would evaluate the sense of belonging for students and the time to completion of the students in your own units. You would ask: "what are the things you are seeing?", "what are the gaps in belonging?", "what are the gaps in student success?, "what are our bright spots?" You move from there to developing a rationale for what you would do in the classroom space. It is a continuous cycle of improvement.

The idea then, the goal, is to improve equity in students belonging-ness and connected-ness, specifically students from racial and ethnic backgrounds that we know have historically been underrepresented and minoritized and feel that lack of belonging. Why the classroom? Because in the labs, in the studios, in the spaces where these students spend a vast majority of the time, instructors have a lot of agency and a lot of opportunities to make students feel like this is a space that I can learn.

As many of you may well know, if you are not feeling comfortable in a space, its very hard for you to work at you maximum capacity. That is the whole idea of the Classroom Equity Action Plan. From my perspective, the more classes in a department, that decide to do even one of the Classroom Equity Action Plans, the greater the impact that it's going to have on the department as you look and survey the report out. Now the more departments within a college, that are engaged in this and encourage input from faculty, the greater the impact the we will see overall on the university.

On the Center for Teaching and Learning website you will see the entire listing of all the equity actions plans. There are four categories: 1) implementing classroom design, 2) articulate relevance of coursework, 3) recognize student identities, 4) normalize and encourage help seeking and support. Within each of those four categories there are three sub-categories, which provide examples and resources to help with implementation.

When we surveyed across the campus and asked faculty members about which one of these plans are you already doing in your classroom, it was really important. I was very heartwarming to see that the vast majority of our faculty members were engaging in one or more of these plans. In areas like English department, they have tackled the vast majority of these overall. 75% of people are looking at building connections in the classroom. So, these are simple equity action plans. They are not asking you to overhaul the class. Depending on where you are at, you can look and decide which one of these you are going to pick up.

I like to think about is as a wave across the canvas. That we have different levels of equity, different boats in the water and some are in the water and some are on dry land because of the different experiences our students have. Over time, as the wave of inclusion comes in through it gets better for everyone, a rising tide lifts all boats.

So think about that rising tide. When you have different "boats" in the water, those boats represent different groups on our campus. Groups that are there because of their sense of what they feel as belonging, but also because of the structural inequities that different groups encounter.

If "water" is inclusion to this analogy, then as you add water, as you add inclusion, everybody will be lifted. But clearly those that had the least amount of inclusion, they will feel it even more. And it is our goal then that those people now feeling that inclusiveness, those students, who go from one place to the next and feel micro-aggressions, if those are reduced in those spaces, then those students will now be able to act and operate at a greater level. That's a validation for the Equity Action Plan.

An announcement just came out today from HHMI, we knew we had to keep it secret because we went down to HHMI and were awarded the very prestigious HHMI grant. When they sent the announcement from HHMI today showing the six schools, who have received this grant, they see it as a major way of driving changing. Not

just at UMass, but after we have gone ahead and we are successful at it and we've worked out the kinks and we can now deploy it to colleges and universities across the country.

I will pass it to Barb Chalfonte, our Associate Provost for Analytics & Assessment for the next section.

Associate Provost Chalfonte: Thank you.

Our Equity Action Plans are ambitious and important. Given the critical nature of the work happening in the classroom, as well as all of the other components for the Equity Action Plan to be successful, the Equity Action Plan team wanted to look at the whole process and see where we could help out. Two areas really jumped out. The first was the assessment of the implementation of the classroom actions and then the other was measuring the holistic nature of students' sense of belonging and connectedness.

First, about the assessments of the classroom actions. What we're talking about being assessed and what you were all asked to do in the action plans, was to assess the progress and satisfaction with the implementation of the classroom actions. So, our team built a tool that is available for you to use. You can use it as you so choose or as we have built it or you could modify it. But we just wanted to give you something so you wouldn't have to deal with that.

So who should be doing the assessment? It is members of the department. Folks who are involved in the classroom actions.

How is the assessment being conducted? We have various methods available and at the end of the semester we also have Qualtrics that will allow you to let us know if you changed anything or if you're seeking assistance or if you want to be paired with other departments who are working on the same classroom actions as you are. This tool is not being used to evaluate a department.

Then in aggregate, like a departmental response, is mainly focused on questions regarding how far along you are in the implementation. Are there portions that you wanted to do? Are you satisfied with how things are going? Then it goes to bigger picture questions like: are you needing assistance? Is there anything you are finding promising? That would be something great that you could share with your colleagues.

The second component is about belonging and connectedness. As you all probably know, that is something my team and I look at regularly. We are also the ones who look at the campus climate survey. Belonging and connectedness is holistic so our students are going through things on campus, not only the work that you're doing in the classrooms but what is happening in the outside of class, in the dorms, and the different groups they are in.

So this about that "rising tide of water" to be about inclusion and belonging. This is just one of many efforts we are making to increase the level of equitable feeling of belonging amongst our students. We will not be disaggregating this to the individual course level.

The reason why we do it the way we do is because of the holistic experiences, avoiding tokenizing the students, avoiding power differentials, and reduce the times this is asked to students. We are asking about connectedness to departments, students, colleges, advisors. We also ask about belonging in the major, having a mentor, respect from students and faculty, sharing true points of view. We also about experiences that most positively impacted their sense of belonging and connectedness in the classes that year.

Please come to our conferences to talk about these issues with us. Thank you.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(Note: Due to recording issues, some unintelligible content may have been excluded or modified.)

1. Principal Administrative Officers

Chancellor Reyes: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

Thank you all for the time. I will start by talking about something that has been affecting us for about five weeks, which is affecting the entire campus community, our students, faculty, and staff. I just want to let you all know that those voices are heard. Instead of restating the statements that my office has made, I invite you to ask me questions. It has been a difficult time on this campus and appreciate all the help from the faculty and administrators.

In the spring semester, we are lining up and really moving fast on the searches for various Vice Chancellor positions. There are four Vice Chancellor searches overall and we expect a final round in March and April of next year. You can already put some things into your calendar regarding this when we have those candidates coming to the campus.

(Note: Due to the aforementioned recording issues, the Chancellor's remarks on strategic planning were unable to be transcribed.)

I know that some of you mentioned that there was some concern given the Supreme Court ruling that may affect enrollment. What I have heard is that our applications from underrepresented minorities are actually increasing from the same time last year. They are tracking this data as it comes in. I think there was some concern about how the URM students would respond and our admissions and recruitment teams have done a great job in showing those students are welcome here.

Thank you.

Interim Provost Malone: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

We just had our first feedback session from our search firm. The response to the perspectives, I am proud to say, has been unusually strong. There is a lot of interest, professionally. There are a variety of backgrounds and some academic officers, totaling in about 154 unique nominations. 23 have officially applied so far and 65 have expressed an intent to apply. I am very optimistic and pleased with the response.

Also, the search committee for the Deans of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts and the College of Education have been appointed. They will be reaching out to their respective communities.

We hope to have a new Provost in March and have some time for faculty to participate with the finalists.

Thank you.

***Vice Chancellor Kennedy*:** Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

As I shared with this group before, this university is renewing and enhancing its commitment in Springfield. University Relations is overseeing and pushing that effort forward. We have hired an executive director of government relations in our Springfield partnerships to help identify needs for the Springfield community. Our hope is that she will help us align with those needs.

The other update is our first search meeting about the co-chair for the Vice Chancellor for DEI. We hope to have finalist by April.

Thank you.

Vice Chancellor Mangels: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

I am participating on the committee for the search of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Campus Life. We are in the process of receiving applications. We will be hoping to start interviews in the spring and probably have a decision around April.

We have begun to rollout a new travel and expense system called Concur. It is pretty well established in most higher education institutions. It will help with travel reimbursements, getting approvals, and receipts. We are hoping for implementation by January at earliest and the pilot we did suggests it went well.

Thank you.

Vice Chancellor Misra: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

I am serving on the search committee for the Vice Chancellor of Human Resources. We had our first meeting in September and the official search was launched in October. We are looking for March or April deadline for a selection amongst the finalists.

Thank you.

2. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Secretary Paik: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

First off, following the launch of our new website, we lost access to all of our PDFs and I am happy to report that with the help of I.T. we have an active archive. You can access the archive through the SharePoint site that you can find on the Faculty Senate website at the bottom of the homepage. You can find all sorts of things that go back decades, and we are working on categorizing those documents. We will also be working on updating our broken links, which may take a while so thank you for bearing with us.

We just finished our committee preferences survey, and we will send it to Nominating Committee. It is not too late to forward any names to have someone participate.

In terms of upcoming business, the Rules Committee has been working the administration to revise the search, appointment, and evaluation procedures for Chairs, Associate Deans, Deans, and Academic Program Directors. This was initiated by Provost McCarthy a while back though much of the work occurred during Provost Serio's tenure. I expect that we will see that starting next month. I think that we should have two readings on it to make sure it is understood.

The second upcoming item is on departmental speech. Many students, faculty, and staff have been impacted by current war and there are questions about how members of the community can communicate with one another in a way that maintains the values of the university. It also raises questions on what the Faculty Senate can do in facilitating such conversations. So, one of the things the Rules Committee was looking at is forming an ad-hoc committee to look at departmental statements and other bodies on the universities to clarify guidelines and co-sponsorships. We will probably see that at the next meeting.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chancellor for his work and commitment to working with the Faculty Senate and thank him for hosting a future Faculty Senate reception.

Thank you.

3. The Chair of the Rules Committee

Chair/Senator Olsen: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

The Rules Committee met twice. Once as the Rules Committee and the other with the administration. In our Rules Committee meeting, we discussed future Senate presentations and trying to map out what might be on deck. We are looking at campus issues like the ongoing concern over medical excuse absences and the frustrations professors are seeing with that.

With the Rules Admin meeting we had a presentation regarding deferred maintenance. That is a presentation we will likely have at the Senate sometime in the near future. Which is a very complicated topic.

We discussed involvement of the Senate in the strategic planning process, which is still being determined. We also discussed the ongoing issues with the adoption of Canvas.

Thank you.

4. The Faculty Delegates to the Board of Trustees

5. The Representative of the Massachusetts Society of Professors

Co-President/Senator Liberatore: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

As always, it is a pleasure to see you all. It is a beautiful day outside although a bit of a hush has fallen over the campus as the academic semester grinds on and students are feeling a little tired. I'd like to take a moment to remind you all to be kind to each other, your students, and especially yourselves. The other thing I'd like to do is remind you that next week is Thanksgiving and so it is a good time for gratitude. And I for one, am very grateful to be a part of this university that does so much to take care of the people in it.

Now on to business, what has the MSP been up to lately? So many things! What is newest and most important on our agenda is organizing for our next contract. So, you may have been in an all union on Wednesday but if not you should know we're sending friendly postcards to the Governor.

These are to remind her that the 8%, which has not yet arrived, is nice, but we would like to keep up with inflation so we can have money for everyday expenses. That is our first mission and we are leading a statewide campaign to do that.

Separately we have issued our demands to bargain to the administration. It is all legal language, but it is not really a demand. We are looking forward to a robust dialogue with them about pay, benefits, and equity. Primarily we're thinking about things like raising the floors, especially for librarians and NTT faculty. Also increasing commercial increments and thinking about other issues like childcare, like mid-career research and things like that. Like the many things we've seen so far in the workload equity plans and expanding and improving these things. I think there are a lot of places where we have agreement already, it is just going to be about hammering out the details.

We are also looking at broader issues around the campus like green initiatives and flex initiatives. We are looking at teaching and way to modernize our workloads and much more. Most of this will not start until January and we will be in touch with faculty about this.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

6. **The President of the Graduate Student Senate**
7. **The President of the Student Government Association**
8. **The Student Trustee**

C. QUESTION PERIOD

Senator Patterson: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

I am here to represent a student concern. In one of my classes on women writers, I asked my students to identify a social problem that exists in their immediate vicinity and try to solve it and one my students mentioned the concern about the lack of sufficient types of feminine sanitary products in the restrooms on campus, which includes pads and tampons. There is only the "light" of version feminine products available at the campus store and that is insufficient to meet the needs of our female students. This is not the first time that I have noticed such a thing. When I asked my students about this issue, every single woman in the class raised her hand, including me. I cannot tell how uncomfortable a day it is when I cannot get access to a sanitary product, especially when they are not distributed fairly on campus.

So, some of their requests were that they would like more of these products available at existing campus stores. They would like to see availability of these products on more campus locations. This may also encourage the campus community to stock these products on a department by department basis. I am helping my students to write a petition and I expect that they will send it through the SGA or directly through the Dean of Students.

I would request that if any of you would like to assist that you please do so.

Thank you.

Senator Roeper: Thank you Presiding Officer Brewer.

My question is for Chancellor Reyes. What are the guidelines and policies concerning campus recruiters coming on campus? Is there such a policy? Especially for various military industrial complex corporations?

As you know, the background here is that Raytheon and their recruiting on campus, and there is some history here with objections about the CIA recruiting on campus. It is very clear that there are all kinds of organizations that don't recruit on campus. We don't have recruiters from the Israeli Defense Force, but they might want to come here, so this is a serious issue and exactly appropriate for this body.

(Note: Due to recording issues, some unintelligible content may have been excluded or modified.)

Chancellor Reyes: Thank you. There are various recruiting guidelines that are on our website. Recruiters need to go through the university in order to be able to come onto campus.

Senator Roeper: I didn't quite understand, thank you. So, if you want to recruit on campus for some organization, how do you apply to do that?

Chancellor Reyes: You have to follow the guidelines on our site.

Senator Roeper: I see, those are the guidelines for how you recruit. Or are they guidelines for how you are allowed to recruit.

Chancellor Reyes: It says how you are allowed to recruit as well.

Senator Roeper: So you think they are adequate and shouldn't be an issue for the Faculty Senate?

Chancellor Reyes: I don't think there's an issue with them. There are organizations that come to campus, there are faculty, there are staff, as long as they abide by the national standards.

Senator Roeper: Does the campus faculty and students and other representatives who have any voice in deciding whether they are allowed on campus?

Chancellor Reyes: That goes through the campus.

Senator Roeper: So the question should be shouldn't there be some oversight on these matters?

Chancellor Reyes: *(lost audio)*

Senator Roeper: I see. There was a controversy that perhaps you're not aware of about Google recruiting on campus a couple of years ago, actually initiated by Computer Science, where they were concerned about the effort to establish a Muslim registry in this country so that every Muslim in this country had to register. Sounds a little bit like Nazi Germany. I come from a refugee family, and my relatives were affected by this. And a number of people in the computer science department said "Should Google be able to come on campus and recruit people to organize," it's obviously a computer issue, "organize how a Muslim registry would be implemented." They felt, and I felt too, the observation that we should be able to address as a campus community, I don't think it should be sort of sidelined into some procedural issue. Well if students wanna work for them they can. These are issues that we are giving corporations and other groups of people including the CIA, which is now on campus, a platform on which to recruit people. We can't prevent them from renting a hotel in town and advertising somewhere, saying "Hey, come up to this hotel, we wanna recruit you." But we can make a decision about whether our facilities and our capacity as representing the people of Massachusetts are going to be used for that purpose.

Presiding Officer Brewer: I would like to remind members that all communication should be directed to the Presiding Officer and that there should be no direct dialogue on the floor of the Faculty Senate.

Secretary Paik: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

In response to Senator Roeper, may I suggest that he submit a proposal to the Rules Committee and provide a report to you regard that proposal.

Senator Sollinger: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

Along the same line of questioning. This a student request that the campus divest from war profiteers. This in regard to the 57 students who were arrested in the protest in Whitmore. Many students do not feel safe after their arrests. I want to thank the MSP for affirming our right to academic freedom. I would like to ask the Chancellor and the Provost to minimize the repercussions on our students after their arrests, not only from the campus but also from the state. My question is whether this body has any say in preventing the students from being further punished?

Thank you.

Secretary Paik: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

Thank you for the question. If a member would like to make a resolution or proposal to consider that action or recommendation, they can do so it can count as business for the next meeting.

Senator Messier: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

I want to recognize Senator/MSP Co-President Liberatore's comments and say that I am very grateful for the work that is being done and being a part of the UMass Library community. But part of this meeting today was a reminder that I had sent out about this meeting's agenda and that people are welcome to come. One of my fellow librarians asked me to ask a question on their behalf.

Everyone is aware of the Senate's recess and that they did not vote on the supplemental budget that includes, not only our raises, but 80+ other unions in the state that are also waiting for their negotiated raises. Some of them going back to 2019 who haven't gotten raises since them. So, I am wondering why aren't the raises, on behalf of this person, carved out into a separate bill? Is this something that MSP and other unions can lobby our legislators so that those unions get their raises as they were promised?

Thank you.

Senator/MSP Co-President Liberatore's: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

So, the State House passed a supplemental budget. The State Senate passed a supplemental budget. There are differences in both of them. The Senate and the House could decide to make a clean bill. The people in charge of this are the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. So short-term, there is not much we can do and our local state legislators know this is ridiculous. The only way to change it is to pass a law that binds them to pass clean bills concerning obligatory funding. But they have to do that to themselves, and it is very unlikely they will do that. Is there a chance that they will figure something out? Yes, but as recently as yesterday a senator was telling me not to worry about it, they'll get it out tonight. So, I don't want to name a promise that I can't hold. The only thing we can do with the State Legislature to fulfil their basic obligation to pay the bills that the Commonwealth agreed to pay, I would tell you, but I don't know what it is. So, I'm sorry to give you that bad news.

Senator Modenos: Thank you Presiding Officer Brewer.

This is a question for Vice Chancellor Kennedy. You mentioned the new Springfield director to do more outreach and I am wondering if there is more room for more faculty to participate on that? I would love for UWW to participate more on that.

Vice Chancellor Kennedy: Yes.

***Graduate Assistant Henrique*:** Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer.

I wanted to let Senator Patterson know that I have seen the work the Health Council has done on the issue of menstrual products and the Period Project. If she needs any help in looking into the history of that effort, I can provide the minutes of the Health Council and some names of students who worked on it in the past to help strengthen her case.

D. ANNUAL REPORTS

1. Annual Report of the Academic Matters Council 2022-2023, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 24-018.

This Report was Received.

2. Annual Report of the Campus Physical Planning Council 2022-2023, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 24-019.

This Report was Received.

E. NEW BUSINESS: COURSES (CONSENT AGENDA)

[A consent agenda may be presented by the Presiding Officer at the beginning of a meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda.]

MOTION: 07-24 **That the Faculty Senate approve the courses ART-HIST 349, ART-HIST 727, CATALAN 315, CICS 237, FILM-ST 385, FILM-ST 440, JUDAIC 303, LABOR 616, LABOR 681, LLC 514, M&I-ENG 682, PORTUG 457, PUBHLTH 482, SCH-MGMT 533, SCH-MGMT 658, SCH-MGMT 659, SCH-MGMT 664, SCH-MGMT 665, SPP 615,SPP 621, SPP 624, SPP 633, STOCKSCH 622, as recommended by the Academic Matters, General Education and Graduate Councils.**

Secretary Paik read the motion.

MOTION 07-24 was Adopted.

F. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

MOTION: That the Faculty Senate approve Creation of a Graduate Certificate in

08-24 **Project Management, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 24-020.**

Secretary Paik read the motion.

MOTION 08-24 was Adopted.

G. POLICIES

MOTION: 09-24 **That the Faculty Senate approve the Policy Change Regarding Quinquennial Review of Certificates, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 24-021.**

Secretary Paik read the motion.

MOTION 09-24 was Adopted.

Adjourned at 5:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Anthony Paik, Secretary